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THE MEN OF 1830

BY

ROBERT J. WICKENDEN

Author of "Charles Jacque," "Jean-François Millet," "Le Père Corot," "Charles-François Daubigny," etc., etc.

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The Men of 1830

BONINGTON. RUE DU GROS HORLOGE, ROUEN

Size of the original lithograph, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$ inches

THE MEN OF 1830

By ROBERT J. WICKENDEN

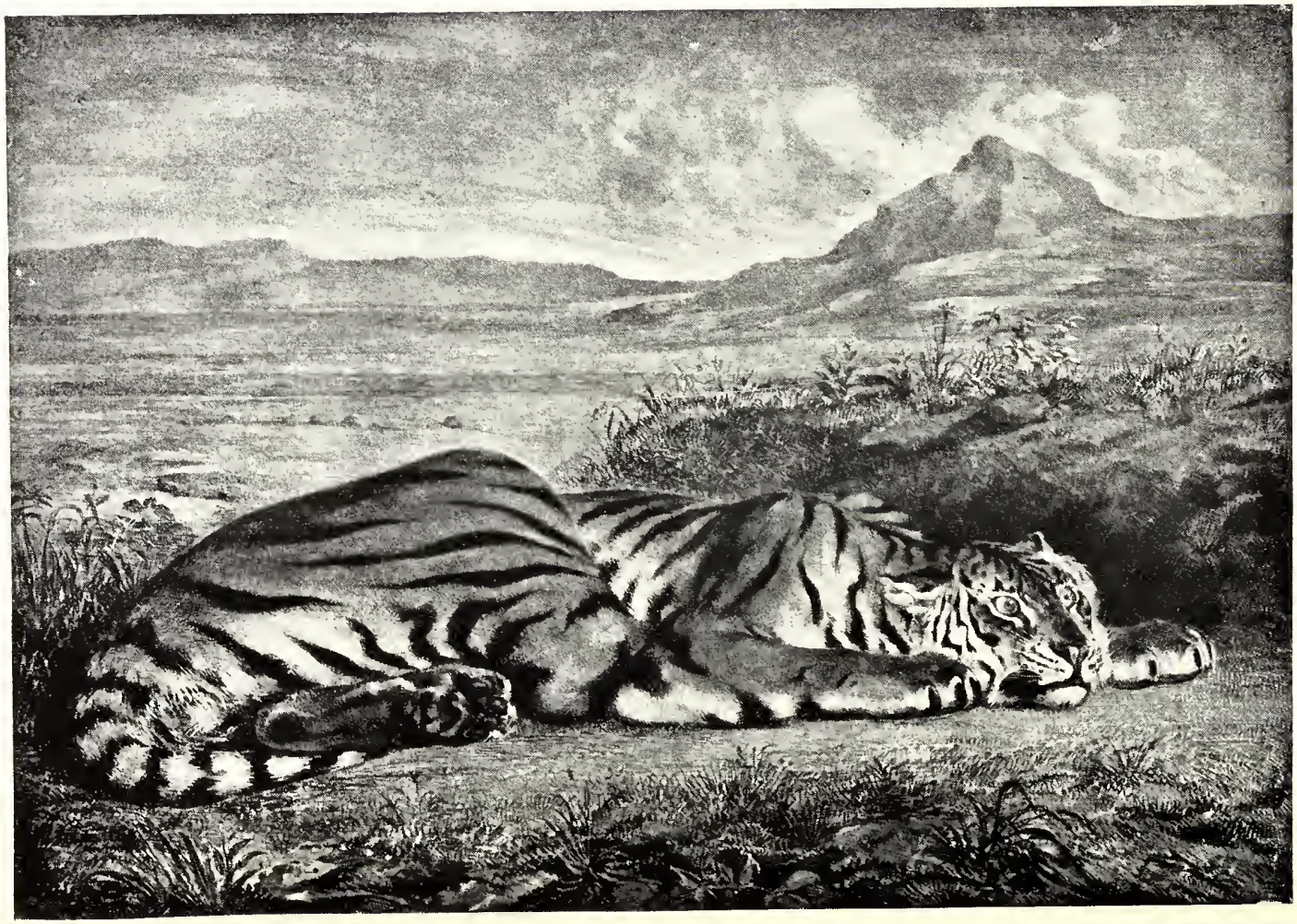
FEW sayings of the witty Mr. Whistler have been more quoted or questioned than his "Art happens" of "The Ten o'Clock," yet no delight in epigram can blind us to the fact that art has usually been representative of social and intellectual conditions existing at the time of its appearance. It may seem to come and go like the wind, but is still subject to laws, less known, but as sure in their operation as those which govern the return of the seasons through the rounding years of the physical world. To understand the character of any great movement or manifestation of art, we must therefore study the conditions that have preceded it.

The excellence of French painting and engraving during *le grand siècle* under Louis XIV was achieved by the perfecting of what already existed under Henri IV and Louis XIII, and such high skill is rarely long sustained. The more licentious period of Louis XV demanded the satisfaction of its frivolous whims, as well as the consecration of its love for pompous display. Art, for the most part, followed society, till not even the good intentions of Louis XVI could save either from the tragic catastrophe of the French Revolution.

During and after that great upheaval, art followed the action and reaction of the rapidly changing forms of government. Louis David, who, as a member of the Convention, voted for the execution of Louis XVI, and was an admirer of Robespierre and Marat, inculcated a return to antique severity; yet when Napoleon took up the reins of government, David signified his acceptance of the self-made emperor by painting him on horseback as a cisalpine conqueror, and as the chief figure in his stately coronation at Notre Dame.

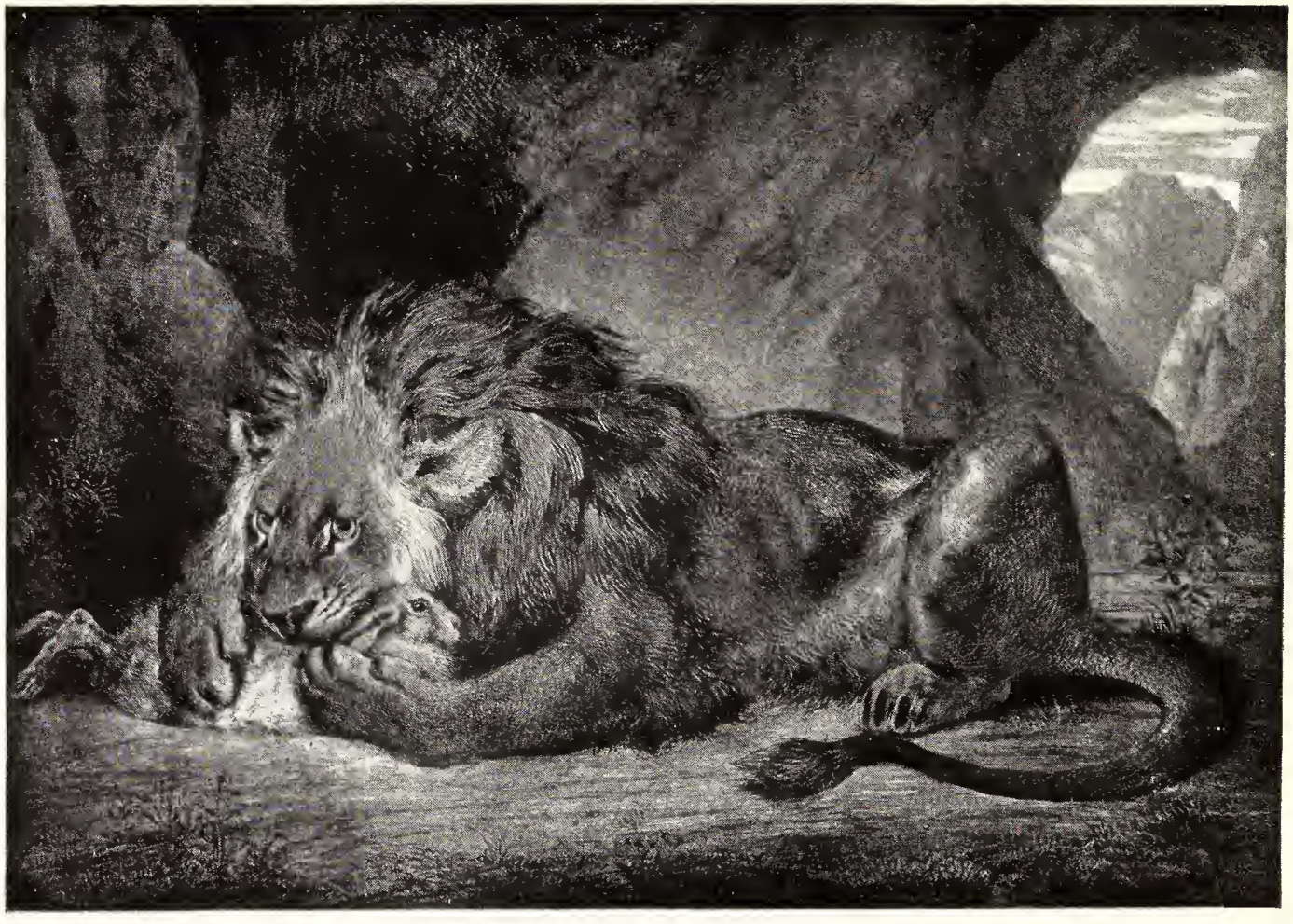
Baron Gros commemorated Napoleon's victories on immense canvases, and under the First Empire and the Restoration, if we except the delicate portraits and poetic compositions of Pierre Prud'hon, the Academy and official schools seemed to become more narrow and pedagogic in their views. In the atelier under the direction of Pierre Guérin were a number of young painters of ardent temperament who rebelled against the restraints of a somewhat despotic discipline. Among them was Théodore Géricault, who was born in Normandy in 1791, and whose early surroundings and tastes had developed in him an admiration for the military types then so much in evidence, as well as for man's faithful companion, the horse. At the age of twenty-one he painted his famous *Officer of Chasseurs of the Guard, charging,* and two years later the *Wounded Cuirassier leaving the Field,* and again in 1816 his masterpiece, *The Raft of the Medusa.* Though these are all now in places of honor at the Louvre, they were the despair of Géricault's master, Guérin, and of other academic authorities at the time they were painted. The artist decided to take them to England

BONINGTON. TOUR DU GROS HORLOGE (EVREUX)
Size of the original lithograph, 13⅛ × 8⅛ inches



DELACROIX. TIGRE ROYAL

Size of the original lithograph, 12⅞ × 18¼ inches



DELACROIX. LION DE L'ATLAS

Size of the original lithograph, 13 × 18 3/8 inches

for exhibition, in which venture he was successful. Géricault was also interested in the newly discovered art of lithography, and made many drawings—in all about seventy-eight—on stone, most of which portrayed various types of equestrian life. Some of these were done in England, and a number of others, of earlier date, are known as "the French set." This new method of making prints, directly from the artist's drawings, in *crayon gras* on the stone, had been invented and perfected by Senefelder during the last years of the eighteenth century. Its autographic precision and rapid method of printing brought it quickly into favor with artists, as well as with the public, who demanded an art that could find its way into the homes of the people. With the Revolution, the more aristocratic art of line-engraving had suffered an irreparable blow. Lithography and a revival of the etcher's art seemed better suited to the needs of the new era of democracy.

Before Géricault's open revolt, in the domain of landscape, Georges Michel, who was born in 1763 and lived till 1843, had turned from classic and heroic compositions to the study of realities, of which style Rembrandt, Hobbema, and Ruysdael had furnished examples. Michel's theory was that "a landscapist who could not find all he needed within four square leagues did not know his business."

The exhibition of Constable's works at Paris in 1824 was greeted with enthusiastic admiration by the younger men, and the masterly studies of Richard Parkes Bonington were equally appreciated. Bonington was an Englishman, born at Arnold, near Nottingham, in 1801. He had come to Paris with his father in

1815, where he received his education in art. Most of his short, active life was spent in France, so that he is often placed in the French school. He died, in 1828, during a visit to London. Besides his paintings of figures, landscapes and coast-scenes, Bonington did some masterly lithographs, including the *Rue du Gros Horloge à Rouen* and the *Tour du Gros Horloge (Evreux)*. These were done for Baron Taylor's "Voyages Pittoresques et Romantiques dans l'Ancienne France," to which a number of the younger French artists, including Isabey and Ciceri, contributed. Bonington's lithographs show great strength of composition and construction, combined with a delicacy, especially in the treatment of architectural detail, that has been rarely equaled.

In Guérin's atelier with Géricault was Eugène Delacroix. He was seven years younger than Géricault, having been born in 1798, but he quickly followed in the steps of his illustrious comrade. His *Dante and Virgil in the Infernal Regions* was shown in the Salon of 1822, and from that time till his death in 1863 he remained the chief of the Romantics. While he was justly celebrated for the brilliant coloring that enhanced his work as a painter, Delacroix also did a number of lithographs and a few etchings. His illustrations of Goethe's "Faust" and Shakspere's "Hamlet" are replete with dramatic action, in favor of which we must overlook certain exaggerations of drawing. Goethe approved of Delacroix's treatment of "Faust," but among his prints many prefer the large lithographs of the *Tigre Royal* and the *Lion de l'Atlas,* which are truly magnificent examples of lithographic art.

RAFFET. COMBAT D'OUED-ALLEG

Size of the original lithograph, 9 9/16 × 14 3/4 inches

In opposition to the views of Delacroix stood Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, who was born in 1780 and lived till 1867. Ingres was as exact in his treatment of form as Delacroix was expressive. Ingres's method of drawing was better applied to repose, and Delacroix's to the suggestion of action. Now that the smoke of the battles between Classics and Romantics has long since cleared away, we are better able to judge these men on their merits, and to see how both have honored and benefited the art of their country. As far as we know, Ingres did but one etching, the portrait of Gabriel Cortois de Pressigny, who was successively bishop of St. Malo, archbishop of Besançon and afterward French ambassador at Rome, where Ingres drew the portrait in 1816. This portrait-etching, executed with a precise regard for the eminent model's character, is worthy of Beraldi's comment that "Van Dyck would not have disavowed its authorship."

During the ten years preceding 1830, art felt the effects of the social and political ferment, which reached its climax in that year, when Charles X was deposed and Louis Philippe, son of Philippe Égalité, was placed on the throne. The Romantic painters and writers, who for the most part sympathized with the popular party, had gathered the strength in numbers and public appreciation necessary to the formation of the "Romantic" school, as opposed to that of the "Classics," who followed more closely the traditions of Greece and Rome. The line of demarcation, never very precise, has become less exact with the advance of time. The group that devoted itself specially to the study of rustic and

landscape subjects, known later as the Barbizon school, were counted with the Romantics, and we have come to include men of both camps, as well as some independents, who worked in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, among "the men of 1830."

The new ideal among both writers and painters found its principal source of inspiration in the picturesque events of medieval and later history as well as in the actual lives and surroundings of the people, and though the Napoleonic wars had ended in widespread dissatisfaction at such immense waste of human life, the military spirit still remained active and created a demand for such paintings and prints as those of Charlet and Raffet and Horace Vernet.

Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet was born in 1792, the opening year of the Revolution, and he lived till 1845. As a young man he had served under Napoleon, and knew the soldier's life in its tragic and comic aspects. This experience furnished subjects for his brush, but more often for prints, mostly lithographic, although he did a few etchings. The legends accompanying Charlet's prints are often as interesting and amusing as the drawings. His principal pupil, who far surpassed him as an artist, was Auguste Raffet, born in 1804. Raffet also painted, but his chief claim to fame is sustained by his masterly lithographs. Within their small dimensions he was able to suggest the movements of great masses of troops in the clash and din of battle. One of the finest and most imaginative is the *Revue Nocturne,* where Napoleon, on his white charger, is seen surrounded by galloping ranks of dragoons, who have risen under the pale, misty moonlight to render a posthumous homage to their

RAFFET. LA REVUE NOCTURNE

Size of the original lithograph, 8 × 10¾ inches

GAVARNI. "LES HOMMES SONT BÊTES!"

From "*Masques et Visages*"

Size of the original lithograph, 8 × 6⅜ inches

chief. Another fine print that recalls Napoleon's magnetic power over his men is *Ils grognaient . . . et le suivaient toujours.* Wrapped in his long coat, the emperor rides ahead with two officers, while the ragged and shoeless *"grognards"* follow on foot through a blinding rain-storm. Besides these reminiscences of the military glory of the First Empire, Raffet treated subjects drawn from the campaigns of Africa and Rome. In the *Combat d'Oued-Alleg* we see thousands of infantry deployed in long lines, advancing *à pas de charge* toward the Arab army massed on the plains beyond. The sense of reality in this small print is so intense that we seem to hear the roar of trampling feet, and the shouts and shots of the advancing host. Raffet enjoyed foreign travel, and visited the Crimea and southern Russia in company with his friend Prince Démidoff. He died at Genoa in 1860, and has been honored with a statue placed opposite Meissonier's in the court of the Louvre.

Horace Vernet was born at Paris in 1789 at the Louvre, where his father occupied a studio and apartment. He was the son of the painter Carle Vernet and the grandson of Joseph Vernet, the celebrated marine painter who executed the series of the ports of France. His military paintings and lithographs met with both official and popular favor. Although their technical qualities are sometimes mediocre, they are valuable as historical records, and often humorous in character. In the way of prints he did some twenty-seven lithographed portraits of contemporary celebrities and nearly a hundred other subjects. Vernet died in 1863.

The crayons of Daumier and Gavarni were prin-

cipally occupied in satirizing the social and political foibles of their day. Honoré Daumier was born at Marseilles in 1808, and in accordance with his ambition to become a painter he joined Daubigny, Meissonier and Geoffroy-Dechaume at Paris in their community of interests and means. What Daumier has left in the way of paintings reveals an exceptional strength with the brush, but necessity and a certain aptitude carried him into the field of caricature, where he proved himself one of its greatest masters. His *œuvre* includes some thirty-seven hundred drawings, principally published in "Charivari," which, if not all equally interesting, are stamped with a power which warranted Baudelaire's opinion that "Daumier was not only one of the most important men in caricature, but also of modern art." In his later life he became blind, and retired to Valmondois, near Auvers, where he died, in 1879, in the house that the gentle and generous Corot bought for him, when the poverty he so little merited had nearly placed him in the street.

"Gavarni," whose real name was Guillaume-Sulpice Chevallier, was a native of Paris, born in 1804. He drew the various types and satirized the follies of his time in a series of prints, of which the technical perfection is all the more astonishing when we know that he rarely worked directly from models, but, like Daumier, evolved his distinctly delineated characters with their perfection of detail from imagination aided by a powerful memory. Gavarni died in 1866. Henri Monnier was also a mid-century master of caricature, creating the immortal Joseph Prudhomme, an incarnation of the rich, self-satisfied, but ignorant *bourgeoisie*.

GAVARNI. LE LION DEVENU VIEUX

From "*Masques et Visages*"

Size of the original lithograph, 8 × 6⅜ inches

ISABEY. INTÉRIEUR D'UN PORT

Size of the original lithograph, 12¼ × 9⅜ inches

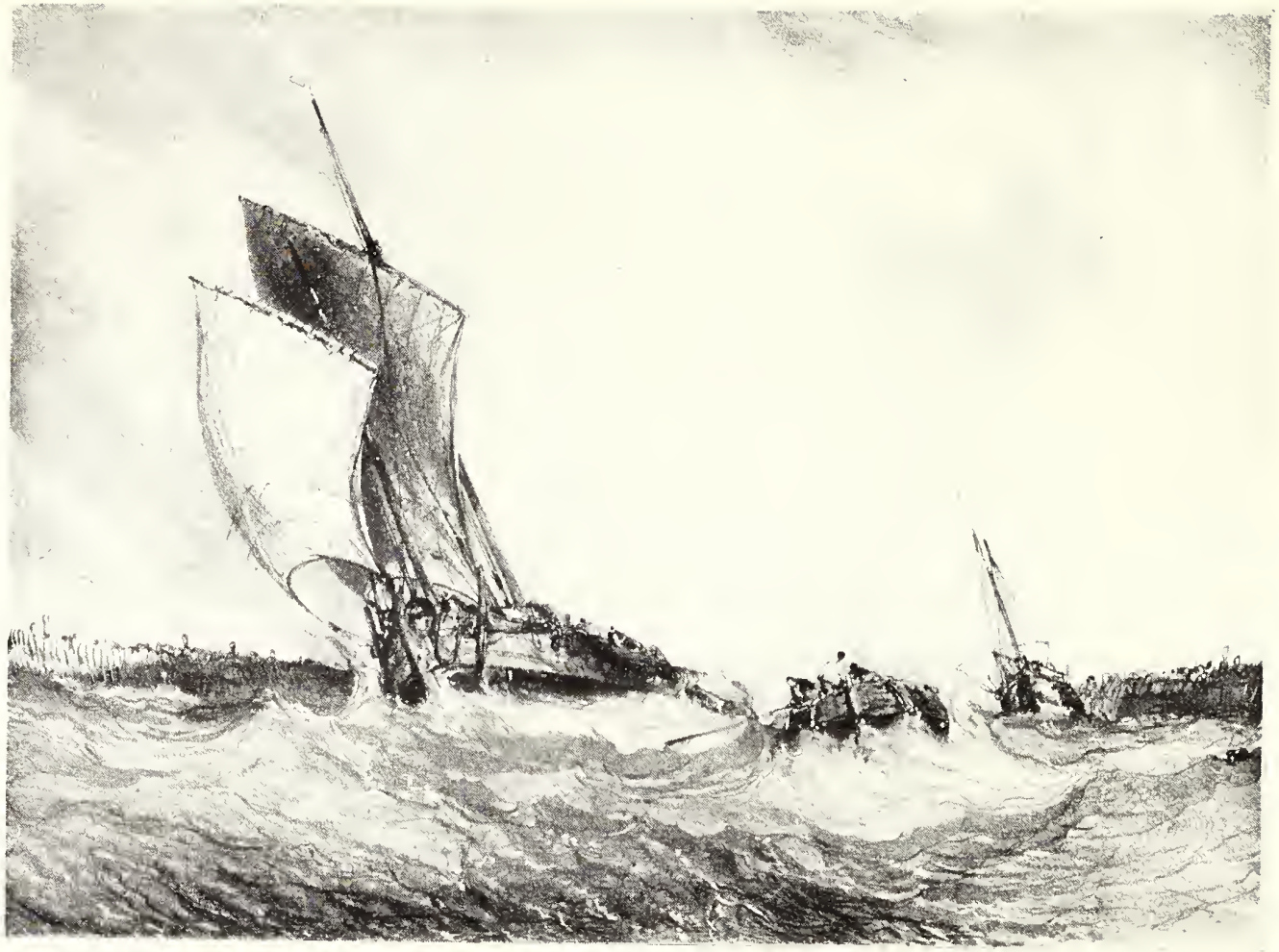
Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, who lived from 1803 to 1860, commenced his career with a few caricatures and satirical pictures, but being inflamed, like Lord Byron, with the desire of helping the cause of Greek independence, visited the nearer East and brought back studies that made him the first painter of Oriental subjects, in which *genre* so many others have since followed him. Later, disappointed at the reception accorded to his masterly drawings and paintings of historical and biblical subjects, he retired from Paris, and for a time settled near Fontainebleau, whence he used to visit Millet at Barbizon. Decamps also painted scenes of the chase, dogs, and game-keepers, and met his death by the running away of a vicious mount he was riding at an imperial hunt under Napoleon III in the forest of Fontainebleau. Decamps's prints, about thirty-five in number, belong to his earlier period, and were executed by the lithographic method.

Eugène Isabey, son of the miniature- and portrait-painter J. B. Isabey, was born at Paris in 1804, and lived till 1886. During his later years he dealt principally with the decorative phases of mediæval and later Renaissance life; but earlier in his career, as an associate of Bonington, he had been a notable painter of seaports and marine subjects. He was appointed royal marine painter to the Algerian expedition of 1830, and his contribution to *estampe* was a series of lithographs of fisher life and coast scenes, as remarkable for their originality in composition as for the perfection of their technique. Isabey knew all the possibilities of lithography, and employed point, pen, and stump for the production of his prints, which, in

Monsieur Beraldi's estimation, rank next to Bonington's *chefs-d'œuvre*.

Associated with Delacroix in Guérin's studio was Paul Huet, whose predilections toward the study of familiar landscape, river and coast scenes, led to a congenial companionship with Bonington and Isabey. The delicacy of his health did not prevent him from sharing in the revolt of the younger men against academism. He was one of the earliest precursors of the new landscape school, basing his paintings, etchings, and lithographs on careful studies from nature. His temperament was of a sensitive make-up, and although his works united graceful composition with truth of detail in their portrayal of forest interiors and the life of Norman villages and seaports, Huet never seemed to meet with the appreciation accorded to his contemporaries. Not until 1911 did he receive the supreme consecration of a posthumous exhibition of his works at the École des Beaux-Arts, when his merits were better seen and understood. Huet was born in 1804 at Paris and died there in 1869.

Charles Jacque (1813–1894) was more active and energetic in his revival of the etcher's art. Taking his fire from the altars of the seventeenth-century masters of Holland, he applied it so effectively in his studies of French rustic and provincial life as to bring etching again into favor as an autographic method. Before he began to paint he had practised etching almost exclusively for some ten years, beginning in the early thirties, and achieved renown as the greatest modern delineator of pigs, poultry, and sheep. His work follows in logical sequence up to the time of his death in 1894, and no other etcher of rustic and ani-



ISABEY. RETOUR AU PORT

Size of the original lithograph, 8½ × 11¼ inches

HUET. LE CRÉPUSCULE.

Size of the original lithograph, $5\frac{9}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ inches

mal life has surpassed him in the quality or quantity of his plates. While Jacque was equally successful as a painter, the very notable revival of etching which took place in the nineteenth century was largely due to his initiative. Among his several hundred plates may be counted some absolute masterpieces. He succeeded in interesting the Barbizon group, chief among whom stands Jean-François Millet.

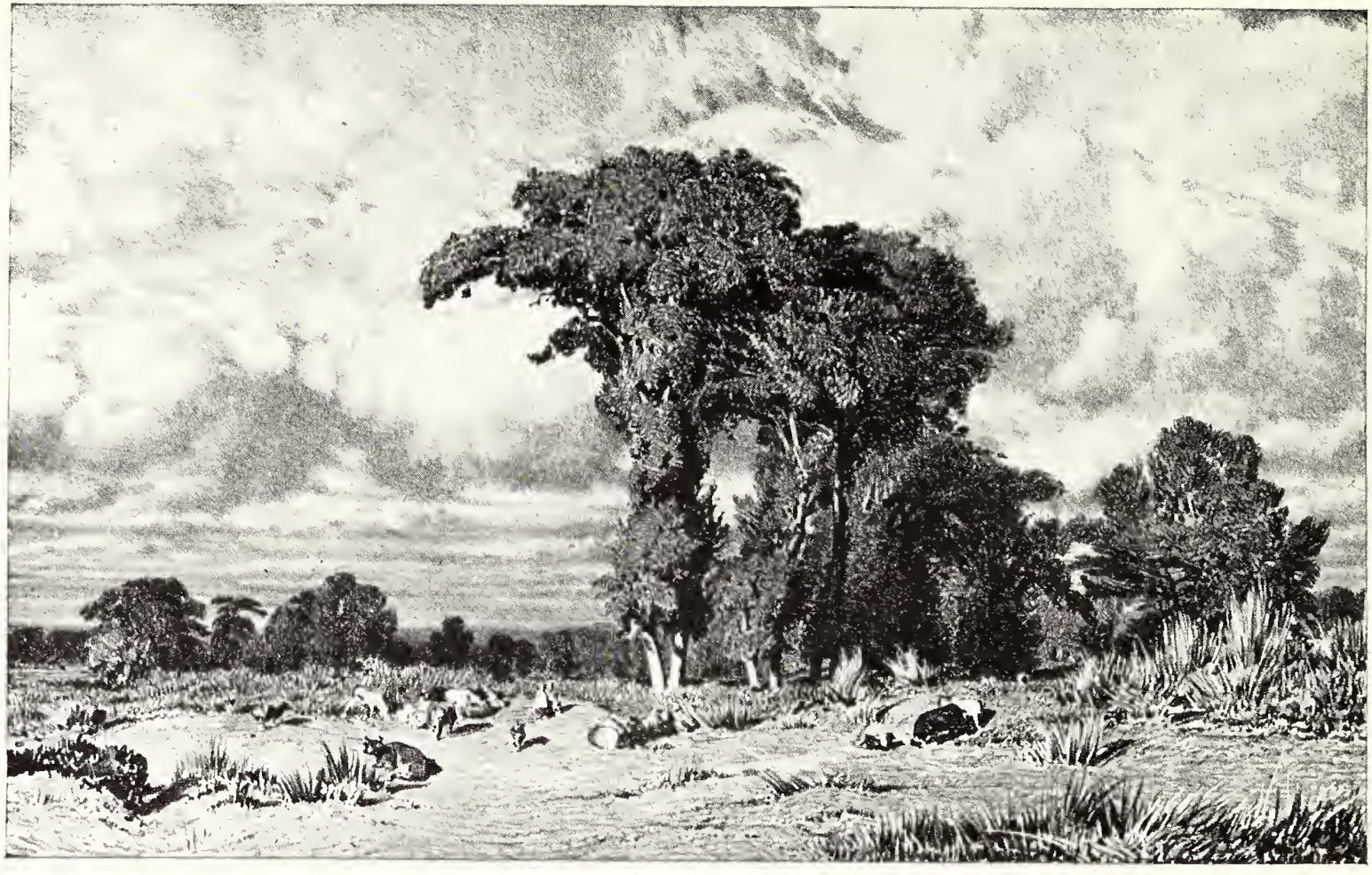
The events of Millet's life, from his birth at Gruchy in Normandy in 1814 till his death at Barbizon in 1875, have been frequently recounted. He did not etch many plates and drew still fewer lithographs, but the rustic subjects on which he concentrated the force of his powerful mind evince such grandeur in their composition and design, combined with a masterly simplicity of execution, that they will ever remain as *chefs-d'œuvre* among the prints of the nineteenth century.

As a complement to the sublime creations of Millet, Corot's poetic landscapes offer the charm of their persuasive beauty. Corot, born in 1796, united the classic and romantic in his education, but remained so personal in his views that his art retained a youthful freshness up to the time of his death in 1875. He did not commence etching till he was fifty, and in the rare prints he has left, we find the same regard for graceful lines and eloquent masses of tone that distinguishes his paintings. He did a number of lithographs, exquisite in quality, and more numerous *clichés-verres*, principally executed at the suggestion of his friend Alfred Robaut. These also are stamped with the mark of a rare personality, often revealing in their frank unaffected lines the intimate side of Père Corot's character.

Charles-François Daubigny began etching in 1838, when he was twenty-one years old, and continued to practise the art till 1877, within a year of his death in 1878. Daubigny's long practice taught him all the resources of etching, and this, combined with his ample knowledge of nature, resulted in a number of masterly plates, unequaled in the rustic and riverside phases of French landscape art. Daubigny had studied the masters of landscape who had preceded him, but brought to his own works the rare freshness of vision and energy of execution that distinguish him among the landscapists of the nineteenth century. His etchings include about one hundred and fourteen plates.

Théodore Rousseau (1812–1867) and Jules Dupré (1811–1889), prominent as they were in the painting of landscape, and as leaders in the phalanx of 1830, did but few original etchings or lithographs. Rousseau's contribution consists of four etchings, one lithograph, and one *cliché-verre* similar in composition to the paintings of forest interiors and logically constructed landscapes by which he is widely known. Jules Dupré did some eight lithographs that were executed early in his career, several of them as reproductions, and others as preparatory studies for his works in oil-colors. The prints of both these men are prized as much by reason of their rarity, as for the masterly qualities that distinguish all their work.

One remarkable landscapist, Alexandre Calame, was born in Switzerland and lived principally at Geneva. He often exhibited and received recompenses for his works at the Paris Salon. His exquisitely finished lithographs are of scenes in his native land, in which mountains, lakes, and wild rivers are portrayed under



DUPRÉ. PACAGES DU LIMOUSIN

Size of the original lithograph, 5½ × 8½ inches

DUPRÉ. BORDS DE LA SOMME (PICARDIE)

Size of the original lithograph, 5½ × 8½ inches

atmospheric effects that vary from the limpid delicacy of sunshine to the sublime shadows of the storm. Calame died at Mentone in 1864, and is one of those artists whose true value will become more evident with the advance of time.

As a pupil of Corot and Daubigny, Adolphe Appian, born at Lyons in 1819, might be considered as attached to the 1830 group. Some of his etchings are especially faithful in their study of tree forms or open spaces of still water, and others are decorative representations of southern landscape and port scenes. Mr. Hamerton has praised Appian's work most highly in his "Etching and Etchers." Careful technique and an exotic quality due to sympathy with his native Southland, make his work a valuable addition to nineteenth-century etching.

The architectural beauties of old Paris never found a more devoted lover than in Charles Meryon, who was the son of an English doctor of the same name and a Parisian ballet-dancer, Narcisse Chaspoux. He was born in 1821. His great art stands in a class by itself, uniting intense romanticism and poetry of effect with a most minute precision of execution. He had spent seven years in the French navy, which he left with the grade of lieutenant, to devote himself to art. Though Victor Hugo qualified his work as "magnificent," and Baudelaire, with others, tried to befriend him, he died, insane, after suffering all the pangs of poverty, at Charenton, in 1868. His work merits the wider study and unqualified appreciation it has since received, and, although marked by a distinct individuality, Meryon's place is among the Romantics and the men of 1830.

Another etcher whose skilful needle portrayed the quaint corners of the French capital, somewhat later, was Maxime Lalanne (1827–1886). In such a plate as the *Rue des Marmousets* and in river and port scenes of Paris and Bordeaux, Lalanne furnished a standard of style, by his frank use of the open line, that has been appreciated by modern masters of the art. Lalanne wrote a book on etching, and another on charcoal-drawing, to which latter art he devoted much time and attention.

One odd character, thoroughly representative of his epoch but less known, was Adolphe Hervier (1821–1879). He had spent much time about old Norman towns and ports, and his etchings and lithographs of fishing-boats and curious bits of architecture peopled with quaint figures, often possess a rare strength, combined with originality of composition and treatment. He was "discovered" several times by Théophile Gautier, Champfleury, and Burty, but remained a bohemian of Montmartre to the end of his days.

A number of others might be mentioned, including Achille Devéria, Marvy, Veyrassat, and Meissonier, whose art grew out of the 1830 movement, while the rise of the distinguished group of French repro ductive etchers in the last century was another indirect result. Bracquemond, Seymour Haden, Whistler and his school also inherited its principles. Of lithography especially, as well as of etching, the period has left us many precious examples.

Notwithstanding their independence of academic methods and a generous breadth in their choice of subjects, the men of 1830 benefited largely by the classic and conservative traditions out of which they

HERVIER. A LA PORTE D'UNE FERME

Size of the original lithograph, 7¾ × 5¾ inches

HERVIER. INTÉRIEUR D'EGLISE

Size of the original lithograph, 8¼ × 5⅝ inches

advanced to a more intimate study of nature; and from a well-balanced union of the ideal with the real resulted those rare qualities that assure this gifted group a permanent and honored place in the annals of modern art.